Universal Religion.

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THE GOSPEL OF JUDAISM.

POEM.

THE IDEAL MAN.

Psalm XV, translated by Wellhausen for the "Polychrome Bible."

O Yahweh, in thy tent who dares to sojourn?
On Thy holy mountain who dares to dwell?
He who lives blamelessly and practices righteousness,
And speaks from his heart what is true,
Who utters no slander with his tongue,
Does no wrong to another,
And his neighbor he does not calumniate,
Pompous arrogance he despises,
The God-fearing man he respects;
He pledges his word to his neighbor and keeps it,
He who does this, for all time cannot be shaken.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS FROM THE "OLD TESTAMENT."

The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way, but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, but they that deal treacherously shall be taken in their own mischief. He that is steadfast in righteousness shall attain unto life, but he that pursueth evil doeth it unto his own death. Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice. He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness and honor. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but

righteousness delivereth from death. The path of the righteous is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—(Proverbs.)

Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh and bow myself before the most high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings? Will Yahweh be pleased with ten thousand rivers of oil? He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good. For what doth Yahweh require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk in humility before thy God—(Micah vi, 6-8.)

PRAYER.

From the Old Testament, Ps. XVII.

Hearken, O Yahweh, to innocence, to my entreaties give heed, attend to my prayer from lips free from guile. From Thee my right will proceed. Shouldst Thou prove my heart, shouldst Thou search me at night, though like ore Thou shouldst try me, Thou wilt find nothing. I have held fast to the law Thou hast uttered. Aloof have I kept from the paths of the violent. My steps have followed close in Thy footprints, my feet have not faltered. I call Thee, O God, for Thou wilt answer me. Incline Thine ear, listen to my speech. Of Thy favor show noteworthy tokens, Thou helper of those seeking refuge.

THE DISCOURSE.

"In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death."—Old Testament: Proverbs, 12:28.

We are to consider next in this series of discourses the Gospel of Judaism—the religion of a people whose story extends over thirty centuries and is, without exception, the most remarkable in the history of nations. A people, homeless, suspected, persecuted; wanderers over the face of the earth, seeking a home, yet finding none; subjected throughout the Christian centuries, even to our own day, to gross indignities from the people of Jesus and Paul, both of whom were Hebrews; a people victimized by Gentile prejudice, so deep and so inhuman that even little children of refined Jewish parents come home from school crying because of abuses heaped upon them by the children of "Christian" parents, whose finest religious inheritance is from Moses and his successors; a people whose religious

patriotism has been intensified by persecution to such a degree that, no matter how liberal his convictions may be, a Jew will remain a Jew so long as the Christian makes it a reproach to be a Jew; a people numbering today eleven millions, and of the American million or more it must be said that, as a class, they represent the most self-respecting, self-reliant, self-supporting, self-sacrificing, law-abiding portion of our mixed population. Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism—the three religions that remain to be considered—are all of Semitic origin. Just whence the Semites came is still one of the vexed questions of ethnology, but in historical times we know they occupied the Tigris-Euphrates valley, or Mesopotamia, and here it was that the ancestors of the Hebrews lived. They were one of many Semitic tribes that migrated to the Mediterranean shores. After a relatively brief sojourn in Goshen, on the Egyptian border, they marched, under Moses, northward to Canaan, settling down to agricultural life and organizing a religion which, like Vedism, early Buddhism and the most ancient religions of Persia and China, underwent development, its evolution ranging from the crude polytheism and ethics of patriarchal times to the pure monotheism and highly specialized morality of the post-exilian prophets.

As we turned to the Vedas to know what the gospel of Hinduism is, to the "Pitakas" for that of Buddhism, to the "Avesta" for the gospel of Zoroastrianism, to the "Kings" and "Analects" for the Confucian gospel, so we turn to the Bible of Judaism to learn what its gospel is. The Bible of Judaism is the Old Testament, or Covenant, as it should be called, because "testament" is a mistranslation of a Greek word meaning covenant or agreement, and refers to the agreement said to have been made between the Hebrews and their God, acording to which he promised to show them his favor; even as the "New Testament" stands for the pledge of God's favor through Jesus the Christ. This Hebrew Bible consists of thirty-nine books divided into three main sections,—the "Law," the "Prophets" and the "Writings." Modern criticism has discovered that many of these books are of composite authorship and that they have not been arranged in chronological order; but to discuss these

and other results of the "Higher Criticism" would take us too far afield. Prior to the year 450 B. C., when the Pentateuch appeared, many books had been written, but no one as yet had thought of making a collection of sacred writings. Naturally, attention was turned first to the laws which it was believed Yahweh had ordained for his people. Interest centered next upon the story of the beginnings of the nation's history and of the creation of the world. Then all this literary material was brought together and passed through successive editions till it finally appeared as we now have it in the Pentateuch. For a long time this "Torah" alone constituted the Bible of Judaism. But as the people became increasingly interested in their past history they grew to feel that the books of the historians and prophets were also part of God's word to Israel and consequently a second collection was made about the year 250 B. C., known as "the former and the latter prophets." For a long time "the law and the prophets," constituted the Bible of Judaism, as the New Testament phrase, "the law and the prophets," plainly indicates. Later, other books,—Job, Proverbs, Jonah and most of the Psalms were written, and all these were collected to make the third group known as "the writings." It so happened that the Palestinian Jews did not agree with the Egyptian Jews as to what books should go into the collection, and so the discarded ones were called the "Apocrypha," meaning doubtful. These were never received by the Palestinian Jews because not sufficiently authenticated, lacking the authority of the canonical scriptures. To our Roman Catholic brethren the books of the Apocrypha are canonical, but not so to most of the Protestant sects, for they reject them.

The Torah, or book of the Law, it was found, needed explanation. Accordingly an explanatory literature was started covering the century before and after the beginning of our era and constituting itself a book,—the "Talmud." It may be described as the attempt to reduce to rule the spirituality of the Hebrew legislators, prophets and psalmists.

Now the significant fact concerning this great body of Jewish sacred literature is that one particular message or gospel is characteristic of every section of it. Hence one may properly speak of "the gospel of Judaism," and it may be summed up in the word **Righteousness.** That is the note which

Judaism contributes to the symphony of Universal Religion. True, the word Righteousness gained in breadth and depth of content with the experience and reflection of the people, but throughout all stages of its growth the word invariably stood for a standard of conduct of which God is the author. Accept that standard, try to live up to it, fulfil the law of righteousness,—this has been the gospel of Judaism in all ages. Let us review briefly the religious history of the Jews in Old Testament times to see how this statement is borne out.

Go back with me to the patriarchal age, in which Abraham overshadows all other personages. Though it be true that Abraham is a composite figure, representing a tribe rather than an individual, yet the personality as presented to us in the book of Genesis makes us feel that he is typical of the tribe and so may be treated as an individual. He is the first Jew, bidden by a compelling voice in his own heart, to leave the land of his fathers, to go from Ur in Chaldea westward and lay the foundations of a new nation. Yahweh (Jehovah) is represented as making a covenant with Abraham and in the very heart of the agreement are these words: "Be thou perfect, be a source of blessing, recognize me thy God." (Gen. 12:2, 17:2). How admirable a summary we have here of the triple content of righteousness, which the exilian author believed obtained in the patriarchal era!

Second only to Abraham in historical importance is Moses, the most commanding figure in the sacred Scriptures of Judaism. He is the father of Hebrew liberty, the author of Hebrew legislation; framer of the original code out of which the ten commandments as we know them, were eventually developed. A masterpiece of Michael Angelo, now in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli at Rome, represents the great legislator at the most dramatic moment of his philanthropic career. It is the moment when, having descended from Mount Sinai with the revealed tables of the law under his arm, he sees the Israelites dancing about an Egyptian idol. His eyes flash with scorn, his beard trembles with emotion, his left foot is thrown wildly back, in the next second he will have risen and dashed the sacred tablets in pieces on the ground. Standing before this colossal statue one hardly knows which to admire more, the sculptor's genius as an artist, or his mastery of the Old Testa-

ment record. Granted that Moses derived the substance of his original code from Hammurabi, as the inscription read on the black marble pillar discovered recently at Persepolis, would suggest, yet positive genius is apparent in the adaptation of this Babylonian code to the needs of Hebrew life. And in presenting to his people this code Moses declares it to have been divinely sanctioned and ordained, an absolute imperative of duty, hedging man about with its "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not," a transcendent law of righteousness for the conduct of Hebrew life. To Moses, as to Abraham before him, the gospel of Judaism is righteousness and the Sinaitic code is its embodiment.

Even the maxim, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," which belongs to the ethics of this period, represents not revenge, but righteousness, justice, as then understood.

In the course of the five centuries following the death of Moses, Israel comes into closer relations with her neighbors, causing her existence as an independent nation to be threatened again and again and her future to become increasingly involved and uncertain. There were those who felt that Yahweh was all-powerful, so that if he suffered the surrounding nations to attack Israel it could only be because of Israel's sin. These were the prophets, i. e., forth-tellers to the nation of what their study of existing political, social, moral and religious conditions had led them. They were politicians, in the best sense; statesmen, making predictions on the basis of careful observations and mature reflection. They take the ground that Israel is assailed by foreign powers because she has forsaken the commandments of Yahweh. To these men, righteousness consists of two elements, recognition and worship of Yahweh alone and obedience to his rules of personal and social morality. First of these prophets in the order of time is Amos, a cattle-herder and owner, moved by religious patriotism to leave his ranch and serve as a reformer of the conditions he has been studying. He argues that national injustice, ingratitude and idolatry (worship of foreign gods) must of necessity mean the absorption of Israel by Assyria and other calamities besides, but that if the people will fulfil the divine law of righteousness, the peace and prosperity of former days will be restored.

Contemporary with Amos is Hosea, a man of finer and more delicate mould. He does not argue, he pleads passionately, tenderly, with the people, beseeching them to remember Yahweh's love for Israel and forsake their evil ways because unrighteousness Yahweh will not tolerate. The fate predicted by Amos and Hosea befell Israel. The northern kingdom became a colony of Assyria, when Samaria, the northern capital, was captured by Sargon in 722 B. C. Soon the southern kingdom of Judah was attacked by Assyria and two southern prophets appear, corresponding in large measure to Amos and Hosea in the north. These were the first Isaiah and Micah. The former (called the first Isaiah to distinguish him from the exilian Isaiah, to whom the last twenty-six chapters of the book of Isaiah are ascribed, advises Judah to trust Yahweh, obey him, otherwise he will not take care of his people. At the same time, the younger contemporary of the prophet, Micah, makes "holiness of life" the burden of his message, summing up his stirring appeal in the familiar passage from the sixth chapter of his book. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, for what doth Yahweh require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk in humility before thy God." Reform ensues in Hezekiah's reign, only however to be followed by a violent reaction under his successor, Manasseh, who restores the idols and idol-temples, violating the law of righteousness in the extreme. Then the book of "Deuteronomy" appears with its impassioned plea for true piety, for free, willing obedience to the Divine Will. King Josiah orders the book to be read to him and thereupon proceeds to institute a drastic reform, making a clean sweep of the various forms and symbols of idolatry, extirpating the worship of foreign gods and achieving the positive results so graphically described in the twenty-third chapter of the second book of Kings. Meanwhile, however, the Assyrian empire loses its supremacy and in the year 606 B. C. surrenders to Babylonia. Judah becomes a vassal of Nebuchadrezzar, King of Babylon, who besieged the city of Jerusalem, captured it and took off the majority of its inhabitants to his capital, where they remained for fifty years (586 to 536 B. C.). All this had been predicted by that greatest student of existing conditions, the prophet Jeremiah. He could see plainly that the Babylonian captivity was inevitable

and his reason was that the people had grown to care more for sacrifices than for righteousness. In his intense religious patriotism Jeremiah stood one day at the temple gate declaring to the people that their temple was nothing, that their sacrifices were of no avail until they mended their ways and that captivity alone could teach them what true righteousness involves. He has his condemnation too for those kings and courtiers who have brought calamity upon Israel.

"Woe unto them that build their houses, but not with righteousness;" that live in palaces while they hold the poor in contempt; that spread the foundation of their wealth on the spoliation of the weaker members of society. Religious righteousness as a social potency is what this Jewish prophet pleads for; against social unrighteousness does he protest.

For those fifty years of exile in Babylon the two chief prophets were Ezekiel and the second Isaiah. The former takes the ground that the captivity was ordained by Yahweh purposely to purify the people and to teach foreigners his power. Ezekiel makes a special claim on our attention in that he defined the required righteousness to be not simply formal obedience to rules of conduct, but a spiritual obedience springing from the heart, a spontaneous and free acting in harmony with the divine will as revealed to Judah. The second Isaiah, with sublime optimism, affirms that captivity is Yahweh's mode of purifying the people so that they may become fitted for the greatness and glory awaiting them in the near future, a picture of which is drawn in glowing colors in the fifty-third chapter of the book that bears his name. He, too, it is, who speaks of the "suffering servant of Yahweh," the innocent people who suffered exile yet had done no wrong, and of them he says, they are the "saving remnant" of the nation through whom Israel will be redeemed. From the context of his address it is clear that the second Isaiah anticipated the Messianic era in the very near future, consequently the assumption that the historical Jesus is referred to in his prophecy is unwarranted and groundless. Isaiah's conception of the coming Kingdom of God, or Commonwealth of Man, was developed out of earlier prophetic thought of Israel's future, and is perhaps the most dictinctive peculiarity of Jewish religious thought. It repre-

sents, moreover, an essential element of the contribution made by Judaism to Universal Religion, the belief in a coming City of Light for a progressing world, a state in which the divine and human will blend, in which there will be complete conformity to the Divine Will and daily life be inspired by the consciousness of the Divine Presence as entering into every part of life. How striking is the contrast between the forward outlook of the exilian prophets to a glorious future and the backward look of their contemporary Confucius whose sources of inspiration were derived from contemplation of a glorious and somewhat mythical past!

As Assyria had succumbed to Babylonia, so Babylonia gave way to Persia. In the year 535 B. C. Cyrus, the Persian king, permitted the exiles to return to Jerusalem, and some forty thousand availed themselves of the privilege. The chief prophets of the return were Haggai and Zechariah. They exhorted the people to rebuild their temple and when, in 515 B. C., the temple had been rebuilt, Haggai remarked that its glory was greater than that of the former temple, because it marked the foundation of a new Jewish church in which the desirable things of all the earth would fill the new building with glory (II. 6-9.) About the year 450 B. C. Ezra, a great law student, with Nehemiah, who was appointed governor of Judea by the Persian king, came to Jerusalem and under their direction a new era of Jewish life was begun, the gospel of righteousness receiving an unprecedented systematic presentation in the books which constitute the Pentateuch. For one hundred years the Jews enjoyed peace under Persian rule, all the while absorbing much of Zoroastrian thought which left its mark on Jewish theology, in the theory of demons and angels, duly transmitted to Christianity. Nay more, the doctrine of "the fall of man," can be traced through Jewish channels back to a Zoroastrian source, no less than the New Testament belief in Satan, demons, angels and ministering spirits (fravashis).

When, in the middle of the fourth century before our era, Alexander the Great conquered the Persians, Palestine became a colony of the Greek kingdom of Syria. Soon there followed the magnificent, heroic, successful struggle for escape from the thrall of Greek rule, led by Judas Maccabeus, culminating in

the acquisition of Jewish independence and its maintenance for a hundred years under a dynasty of priest-princes, known as the Asmoneans, until the year 64 B. C., when Pompey captured Jerusalem and Judea became a province of the Roman empire.

My purpose in this rapid review of Jewish history is to point a most important fact, namely, that the continuous subjection of Judah to foreign powers exerted a salutary influence upon her religious convictions, that these successive subordinations, while destroying national life and annihilating all hope of monarchical re-establishment yet were most favorable to the religious growth of the people. The Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, the terrible hardships endured under the dominion of the Greek Syrians, the Roman siege and capture of Jerusalem, all tended to quicken Israel's consciousness of her relation to her God, to deepen her appreciation of his truth which she believed she possessed in her Bible, to intensify her mighty hope in the Messianic era soon to be ushered in and to add new virtues to those already identified with the word righteousness. We have only to read the literature of the Greek and Maccabean periods to see these religious and moral effects of Israel's political and social tribulations. Not only have we the book of Jonah, teaching that righteousness involves showing mercy to the heathen and that the divine mercy is not bounded by national lines; the book of Job, demonstrating how keen was the desire, on the part of some at least, to know the ways of God with men; the book of Proverbs, a compendium of moral wisdom, with its ever-recurring emphasis on righteousness as equivalent to salvation; but we have also, belonging to this later Jewish literature, most of the Psalms, the hymn-book of the second temple, a collection compiled about the year 150 B. C. Of what do they sing? Of sentiments that indicate a deepened moral and spiritual consciousness resulting from the discipline of adversity. Under Persian rule Israel's religion had been respected and many privileges had been granted the people, but under Greek rule their religion had been derided, their property confiscated, thir political status annihilated, their person oppressed. How natural, then, that they should turn again to their God, and to their own souls and feel a new and deeper need of inward purity, of a clean heart

before God. We see this in the fifty-first Psalm in which the author cries out for a new heart and for a recreating of the very springs of his moral and religious life. "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, purify me with hyssop that I may be clean, wash me that I may be whiter than snow. In me, O God, create a clean heart and a spirit that is steadfast renew in my breast." (Wellhausen's translation, "Polychrome" Bible.)

See, again, how the one-hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm shows forth the deepened sense of reverence felt at this time for the Divine Will as manifested in the commandments and statutes which Yahweh had given unto Israel. "Thy bidding have I laid up in my heart. On Thy behests I meditate. I forget not Thy word. In the way of Thy decrees I delight. Incline my heart to Thy decrees and not to lucre. Behold I long after Thy behests. Through Thy righteousness quicken me." In the twenty-fourth Psalm righteousness is made a condition of membership in the Jewish church, while the fifteenth Psalm is devoted to a description of the ideal man, the man worthy to walk in God's holy hill. Who is he? "He that lives blamelessly and practices righteousness and speaks from his heart what is true, who utters no slander with his tongue, does no wrong to another, who pledges his word to his neighbor and keeps it."

When we follow the story of Israel's vicissitudes through the period of Roman rule we learn again, from the literature between the two Testaments, how reverence and love for the Divine Commandments which were regarded as Israel's priceless possession deepened still more and how righteousness came to include not only the manly virtues of the robust morality inculcated by the prophets, but also the gentler virtues of patience, forgiveness, humility, sympathy, love, inculcated by and exemplified in the lives of distinguished Jewish teachers in the generation just before the birth of Jesus.

In our study of Christianity we shall revert to this stage in the evolution of Jewish ethics.

And now that we have seen how all the way from patriarchial primitiveness down through the post-exilian period to the reign of Herod the Great, in which Hillel and Gamaliel flourished, righteousness has been the priceless pearl of Jew-

ish ethics, the central doctrine of her gospel, this discourse can have but one proper conclusion, namely, that as long as man shall live on this planet all those who wish to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, to read the gospel of her prophets and her poets, her sages and her seers who saw in righteousness the very core and essence of religion.